

**Town of Mansfield Parking Steering Committee for Storrs Center  
Thursday, June 22, 2010  
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office  
1244 Storrs Road (behind People's United Bank in Storrs Commons)**

**5:00 PM**

**DRAFT Minutes**

Members Present: Karla Fox (Chair), Martha Funderburk, Manny Haidous, Matthew Hart, Meredith Lindsey, Ralph Pemberton, Michael Taylor

Ex-Officio Members Present: Lon Hultgren, Carrie Krasnow, Macon Toledano, Cynthia van Zelm

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Karla Fox called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

**2. Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2010**

Martha Funderburk made a motion to approve the minutes of April 13, 2010. Ralph Pemberton seconded the motion. Meredith Lindsey noted that on page 2, her last name had been spelled with an "a" instead of an "e." The motion was approved with the correction.

**3. Remarks from the Chair**

Ms. Fox said today's presentation will be important as it will be focused on the issue of parking at lots adjacent to Storrs Center. She encouraged discussion from Committee members.

**4. Parking Management and Adjacent Parking**

Carrie Krasnow referenced the Power Point presentation, copies of which were given to each Committee member. She said one of the key issues is how to protect against "poaching" – using parking for uses other than intended. Ms. Krasnow said there are two major options: 1) free lots with customer parking only signs and other methods of enforcement, or 2) paid parking with some form of validation.

With respect to enforcement, security could monitor lots. Enforcement efforts could also be pooled among property owners.

Ms. Krasnow said some of the pros are no gates or queuing; no equipment maintenance, supplies; less hassle for legitimate customers.

She said some of the cons are the difficulty in telling who a “poacher” is and who a customer is; the cost of enforcement; and may need to fence perimeters at some properties.

Ms. Krasnow said that there are a few versions of paid/validated parking including traditional gated. This involves someone picking up a ticket (getting it validated by a business they patronize if applicable) and paying at the exit. It is a good way to avoid poaching. One of the pros is that this does not involve enforcement. The cons are if Storrs Center get crowded, people will pay anyway to park; some businesses will want to err on the side of the customer so will give away a validated ticket to anyone.

A variation on the traditional gated method is token-operated gated. A patron will get a token from a merchant for free parking. The token is deposited at the gate. There is no cash transaction and less equipment is involved as there are no gates. The cons include similar to validations, tokens can be challenging for businesses as they feel compelled to give them away unless there are limits.

Lon Hultgren asked how to get a token if a store is closed. Ms. Krasnow said that some communities/businesses will put up the gates after a certain time period while others will close the gates so cars may be unable to move until the morning.

Ms. Krasnow said the advantages of the multi-space meter option is there are no gates and no queuing. The refund process can be awkward for store clerks.

Ms. Krasnow said if validation is an option for the land uses surrounding Storrs Center, should it be done everywhere? Are gates feasible for some areas and not for others? Could enforcement be shared among property owners?

Manny Haidous asked how the Town Hall and Community Center lots will be addressed? Cynthia van Zelm said these lots are being considered comprehensively as part of the entire parking management plan.

Ralph Pemberton said that E.O. Smith High School currently issues permits for its staff and students. Enforcement occurs during the day until 2:15 pm. Mr. Pemberton said that during the day there is not a real issue as he does not have enough spots. The High School has 260 spots total with 50 taken by students. Mr. Pemberton said all permitted parkers have a tag hanging on their window and he is the enforcement officer. Mr. Pemberton thought the tendency will be for people who use Storrs Center to want to park at the High School after the current enforcement ends. How do we address people coming to the High School for events such as plays and athletic contests? If gated, how do visiting parents access the lot?

Mike Taylor said he has High School students parking in his lot. He asked how many students want spots at the High School? Mr. Pemberton said that he expected all of the senior class would be interested in a spot.

Ms. Fox noted that the University can provide enough spots but the key is that they are all not close by their desired locations.

Ms. Fox noted that some of the University parking lots will be redesignated. The residential lot behind Shippee dorm will be changed to a commuter lot. Some residential uses will be moved to outer lots. Ms. Fox thought the main pressure on Mr. Haidous and Mr. Taylor's lots are University commuters.

Mr. Haidous suggested approaching the High School students who cannot get spots at the High School to park elsewhere and serve as a revenue producer for Storrs Center.

Mr. Haidous said that enforcement is key but it is also important to be friendly to the customer and with buy-in from the tenants.

Mr. Taylor agreed that enforcement is key. He said he has to tow as that appears to be the only deterrent.

Mr. Taylor asked if he can have the right to ticket? Could commercial property owners be given this enforcement ability from the Partnership/Town?

Following up on this idea, Mr. Hultgren asked whether a district could be put together where enforcement covers the entire district? Mr. Taylor said he is not concerned about the revenue but protecting his spaces from poachers.

Mr. Taylor said currently he spends approximately \$9,000+ on security/enforcement for his lot using his staff. This does not include maintenance of the lot.

Mr. Taylor expressed his interest in there being some guarantee on revenue from the developer for operations cost for the garage. Matt Hart said one critical component of the Town's discussions with the master developer is a revenue guarantee from the developer.

The issue was raised of whether parking could be free for the user with operations and maintenance financed through leases with the tenants and the property owner. Ms. Krasnow said this done all the time at shopping malls and the cost is passed on to the tenant. Macon Toledano said there is an intrinsic higher cost to a mixed-use development where there is often a public contribution to the public infrastructure. Mr. Toledano expressed concern about passing this cost on to tenants particularly those who are relocating to Storrs Center. Mr. Hart acknowledged not overburdening tenants and queried whether operations and maintenance costs could be covered by the residential users.

Ms. Fox said the key issues are who will pay for the operations and maintenance, and how enforcement will be handled. She noted the appeal of a parking district amongst Committee members. The goal is to look at a cost effective plan that will not cost the Town additional money.

Mr. Hart said he expects that the Town will establish parking as an enterprise fund separate from the general fund which will need to cover operations and maintenance.

Ms. Krasnow noted that tickets and fines can cover enforcement.

Mr. Taylor said his concern is whether there will be enough parking, not whether there is enough revenue.

Ms. Fox asked if the Town might contract with a parking entity to manage and enforce parking. Mr. Hart said one idea is to contract with a company for these services, similar to what the University does with Central.

Ms. Fox asked if this is where a parking authority might be used. Ms. Krasnow said an enterprise fund can be used with or without a parking authority.

Ms. Fox asked if Mr. Haidous and Mr. Taylor's lots could be part of a parking district. Ms. Krasnow thought this could be set up with property owners paying into a fund for enforcement services.

Ms. van Zelm asked if a special services district could be established such as what is done in Manchester and other towns. Ms. Krasnow said this could be done; an analysis would need to be done of how this would work and how much revenue would be generated.

Ms. Lindsey said an enterprise fund would need to cover enforcement.

Ms. Funderburk reiterated the need for enforcement.

Ms. Fox said she was interested in the special services district and enterprise fund scenarios and asked for more guidance before moving forward.

Mr. Taylor suggested that contributions to enforcement be made on a pro rata share based on the number of parking spaces, if needed.

Ms. Fox asked about the concept of a time limit on surface lots vs. meters. Mr. Hart asked about how to charge for on-street parking. Ms. Krasnow said land is cheap at malls. In a dense area, meters help with enforcement. With a free system, there would need to be a lot of money spent on enforcement.

Ms. Fox asked Ms. Krasnow to look at the cost of meters vs. no meters on streets and the costs of a special design district.

Ms. Lindsey expressed concern about making parking attractive to the consumer. They may be more used to paying for spots in a garage vs. on-street parking.

Mr. Taylor said it may make sense to have meters in surface lots that are further away but not for meters on streets that are close to Storrs Center.

Mr. Hultgren said he thought most new parking on streets in Connecticut include meters and this is more the trend now.

**5. Review of next meeting date**

Ms. Fox asked Ms. van Zelm to poll the Committee for a next meeting date.

**6. Public Comment**

David Freudmann expressed concerns about the Town losing money on parking. He did not think meters on street would work well.

Ric Hossack said free parking is preferable. Betty Wassmundt agreed.

Mr. Fruedmann and Mr. Hossack said the University's captive audience allows parking to work at the University.

**7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

*Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.*